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Diane Dufresne now 'showbiz'

By JUAN RODRIGUEZ
for The Gazette

After a decade in show business, Diane Dufresne calls her latest caper at Theatre Maisonneuve, "Mon premier show" — presumably in reference to her new-found "maturity" as an entertainer.

She seems to want to transcend the various phases and gimmicks that brought her attention inside Quebec. No longer does she pass herself off as the East End version of Janis Joplin.

This show has little of the screaming gawky vulgarities she's so famous for in La Belle Province. No more sequinned space-suits for Diane.

The inspiration for Mon Premier Show comes from the singer's vacations in Malibu, California. She was accompanied by her composer François Cousineau and lyricist Luc Plamondon, and Diane got into long conversations on the beach with neighboring Geneviève Bujold. Diane nurtured a tan, they all went to Las Vegas and gambled and saw what "le show bizz" was really like.

And so the new Diane Dufresne walks out in a slinky silk dress and a frizzy long pre-Raphaelite hairdo. She relishes the stage as much as before, but she seems to have a trifle more respect for it. She basks in the atmosphere of single spotlights and clutches at air with her fingertips (or is this a reprise of her early years in Paris?)

BRASS BED

When she adopts props — such as when she's rolled out lolling on a big brass bed — Dufresne is more at home with her new schtick. She is not quite as dependent upon props and costumes for shock value as she was, resulting in a more relaxed performance. She enjoys showing herself off, of course, but there's not as much helter skelter in the way she does it. She seems earnest in putting across sincerity.

She's also in close contact with her band, easily the best group of musicians she's worked with. As usual there is the slick, facile keyboard work of Cousineau, but thankfully he blends into the background often — mainly due to the presence of guitarist-keyboardist Marcel Beauchamps (who used to do this sort of thing with Robert Charlebois). The latter is a brilliantly tasty musician.

So sure of her talents is Dufresne that she has deigned to augment her vocalese with a chorus comprised of France Castel and Judi Richards — the former a budding local star, the latter the most demanded session singer in Montreal.

Without doubt this show conveys Diane Dufresne in her most comfortable hours on stage here, so comfortable that she gives off the atmosphere of "playing for the troops."

New songs, such as Sur la meme longueur d'ondes, inject a spicey pan-American feel to the proceedings, but she is still very much the shapely little girl from Hochelaga playing for the home crowd, indulging in hertheir fantasies of glamor.

DIANE DUFRESNE
. . . no space-suit

Barbed Levesque

Play punctures Quebec

By GAIL SCOTT
for The Gazette

Chansonnier Raymond Levesque opehed last night at the Patriote-en-haut as star of his own play, a play that at its best moments is a bitterly Molieresque fresque of Quebec.

Unlike the old master, however, there is no doubt as to the target of the barbs delivered in Levesque's Allez et ne pas reproduisez vous plus (Go forth and no longer multiply.)

In a combination of gentle songs, dances, gags and pratfalls, everything from police to the mayor to the institution of marriage come under attack — the first two viciously and the last with philosophical sadness.

As the program says, there is nothing particularly new about the theme — hung on the plot of a polluted river which boils over and brings about the end of a city. The innovation is rather in the poetry and the form.

Beginning brilliantly and sagging somewhat in the middle, the play is set on four rocking chairs — from which the characters get up to fight, clown, sing and dance, backed by a three-piece band.

BERATING

Levesque, whose view of the system is black, plays essentially himself: Berating his policeman cousin for his choice of profession, dissuading his wife from bringing a child into a cruel world and pitting his poverty- stricken despair against the virile optimism of his equally penniless father.

Backed by superb acting from Jean-Pierre Menard as the grandfather, Diane Lavallee as Germaine and Normand Daigneault as the rooky cop, the first half is hilarious.

Daigneault does a great job as policemen Ti-mine, describing how he is trained above all to obey in the police-force while snuggling on his sergeant's knee, clad in armoured underpants).

And Menard as the grandfather keeps the audience in stitches — even when the sadness of Levesque's poetry is threatening to engulph us — pinching bottoms, falling off his rocking chair and generally being irrepressible even as the pollution boils over into the houses.

The strength of the play is in its social satire, right down to the voice of Mayor Jean Drapeau in the background announcing he is building the Tour de Babel to climb on as the city sinks into the mud.

But loveable as he is for his sincerity and his sharp eye, Levesque's commentary sometimes slows down to moralising, and that's when it drags.

Liz Taylor's new diamond cost Dick nearly $1 million

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — (UPI) — Richard Burton went on a diamond-buying spree in Johannesburg yesterday and bought Elizabeth Taylor a ring with a rare pink 25-carat diamond worth "close on $1 million."

Tuesday he bought her a wedding ring with 72 flawless blue-white diamonds, Jeweler Ike Schwarz would not say what Burton paid for the wedding ring.

Schwarz said the pink diamond ring has been exhibited at jewelers' exhibitions throughout the world. It was a perfect emerald cut stone, surmounted with blue-white diamonds weighing 16½ carats, he said.

(Photo, John Bisem)

George Kaczanowski (centre) plays Joseph Stalin in Face Crime

Bad acting, symbolism smother play on Stalin

By JACK KAPICA
of The Gazette

Somewhere near the beginning of Face Crime, which Toronto's Creation 2 opened last night at Concordia's Clarke Theatre, a character in long robes says something about nobody knowing "the facts" about Russian strongman Joseph Stalin.

Not long after, one is forced to admit that any curiosity raised by that question has been successfully quashed — and that the next two and a half hours are nothing but unrelieved, flatulent boredom.

Any passion about Stalin is buried under impenetrable symbolism, smothered by wretched acting, and finally killed off by insufferable pretension. Apparently a psychological examination of the Russian dictator, this production of Louis Capson's play takes the form of some weird ceremony, half like a Catholic Mass, half like a witches' sabbath.

The possibilities of what the play is, however, read like a Chinese menu.

Obsession

Face Crime could be a celebration of Stalin, the man or the dictator; it could be a damnation of him; it could also be nothing more than a psychotic obsession. These may all be true, but the last seems to have the weight.

The people performing could be priests, peasants, lunatics on the loose, members of the Ku Klux Klan or simply bad actors with too much government money on their hands.

The plot could be absurdist, theatre of cruelty, symbolist or simply incoherent babbling. Again, the last seems to ring true.

Perhaps the only sure thing about the production, directed with relentless incoherency by Carl Hare, is that its sheer confusion absolves it completely of any accusation it may be worshipping a man who murdered 40 million people.

Any description of the play — which relies on a sterile white stage, long robes and Gregorian chanting — defies attempt. It is performed by 11 people who run about mouthing nonsense with less cogency than a chimpanzee imitating a lab technician.

Strange details

One leaves remembering strange details — in a ceremony mocking the Catholic Communion, gingerbread cookies are handed out to the audience with Stalin's face on them as hosts, and melted orange popsicles in bags pass as his blood. One remembers a song saying Christ and Stalin were brothers.

One remembers a line — "It's better to talk of the redemption of the shoe than of the saving of the soul (or is it sole?)."

One remembers a mask, worn by a girl playing the part of what seems to be a prophet, which improves her image remarkably. Also a punishment box, where the young Stalin is placed on punishment by his teachers, a box furnished with blue neon lights.

The rest seems to fade rapidly into obscurity, to leave no trace of its having been there.

Hopefully it will fade into total oblivion.

<u>Ballet doubles request</u>

GBC seeks $328,000

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens have just launched their annual fund raising campaign, asking for $328,000 in public subscriptions this year.

That is double what they normally campaign for.

The amount is only 17 per cent of their actual budget, though — the rest being supplied by ticket sales at the box office and grants from the various levels of government.

The sum was arrived at after the company made serious cuts in its original plans for the coming season. A plaintive note was added in the publicity material offered at the opening of the subscription campaign yesterday.

"Why $328,000? Because culture requires an investment just like education, although it is not as important."

Apparently Les Grands Ballets Canadiens have arrived at that conclusion after struggling with the Ministry of Cultural Affairs in Quebec for years for adequate support, but they must be alone among purveyors of culture here to feel that they are not as important as education.

* * *

Franz-Paul Decker, the former musical director of the Montreal Symphony, was in town briefly this week.

During the course of a hurried telephone conversation he casually

Music
By Jacob Siskind

dropped the information that he is conducting a production of Wagner's Tristan und Isolde in Dallas, Tex., later this month.

The singers in the title roles? Jon Vickers and Roberta Knie, who sang in the Tristan performance presented in Montreal earlier this season as L'Opéra de Québec's swan song.

Decker did not conduct the production here, but he did conduct the taping for the CBC that took place after the production closed, so he knows the performances of the principals thoroughly.

* * *

Les Grands Concerts used to be the name one associated with the Montreal Symphony's main series of concerts. Now the CBC has picked up the title for its performances at the Salle Claude Champagne each Friday evening.

The series this year will lean heavily on orchestral concerts — these being directed by such CBC favorites as Jacques Beaudry, Roland Leduc, Raymond Dessaint, Jean Deslauriers and Sylvio Lacharité. Raffi Armenian, who conducted one concert last year, has been re-invited and Marc Bélanger, a viola player from Quebec City, will conduct another program.

Concerts begin at 8.30 p.m. and tickets should be obtained in advance from the CBC building on Dorchester St. east. They are free.

The first concert will feature the Classical Quartet of Montreal in a program of string quartets by Haydn, tomorrow evening.

* * *

The Opera Studio at the McGill Faculty of Music undertakes its first major production this week in its new locale, the Pollack Concert Hall, with Benjamin Britten's **The Rape of Lucretia.** Performances tomorrow, Saturday and Sunday.

The production and stage direction are by Luciano Della Pergola, the head of the Opera Studio, with the orchestra conducted by Eugene Plawutsky. This is actually the first time this work is being offered in Montreal.

Music lovers may recall that some 20 years ago there was a production of the opera at the Stratford Festival in Ontario that starred the then unknown Canadian tenor Jon Vickers.

The part of the Male Chorus, which Vickers sang then, will be taken in this production by Alain Nonat, who has just returned from several years of study in Europe. Will lightning strike twice?

DECISION

Ottawa, October 31, 1975

The Canadian Radio-Television Commission announces the following decision effective forthwith.

Decision CRTC 75-534

MONTREAL, QUEBEC — 741209100

Supravox Corporation Limitée — Supravox Corporation Limited

Application to amend the broadcasting licence for CKMF-FM Montreal, Quebec to add Subsidiary Communications Multiplex Operations (SCMO).

TORONTO, ONTARIO — 740007000

Radio Rogers Limited

Application to amend its broadcasting licence for CHFI-FM Toronto, Ontario to cease Subsidiary Communications Multiplex Operations (SCMO).

TORONTO, ONTARIO — 740435300

Application to amend its broadcasting licence for CHUM-FM Toronto, Ontario to add Subsidiary Communications Multiplex Opeartions (SCMO).

Decision: APPROVED

At the public hearing in Hamilton, Ontario on May 6, 1975, interventions to the CHUM Ltd. applications raised the question of whether scarce public frequencies should be utilized for SCMO transmissions of background music, or other services that are of little relevance to the general public in the context of the Broadcasting Act particularly as this background music service can be distributed by other means.

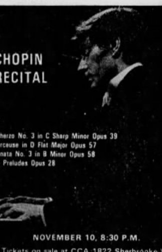
At present the special receivers required to decode the SCMO signal are not widely available to the public. Nevertheless, the success of "talking book" services to the bind operating in the United States seem to indicate that a valuable service to the public can be rendered via SCMO.

As demands on the FM spectrum increase, particularly for specialized broadcasting services to limited segments of the population, the possibility of a more meaningful use of SCMO will have to be considered.

The Commission considers that Subsidiary Communications Multiplex Operations constitute a form of broadcasting within the meaning of the Broadcasting Act. Licensees are therefore not exempt from their general responsibility under the Act for the content of such transmissions.

Guy Lefebvre
Director-General of Licensing

Canadian Radio-Television Commission — Conseil de la Radio-Télévision Canadienne



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